



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

## News Release

SBOH 01-13

**For immediate release:** November 13, 2001

**Contact:** Craig McLaughlin, State Board of Health, (360) 236-4106

### **Board of Health report on emergency response of public health system highlights need for greater capacity**

*Meets Nov. 14, 9 a.m.–3:45 p.m., WestCoast Grand Hotel at the Park, 303 W North River Drive, Spokane, Wash.*

**OLYMPIA** –The chair of the Washington State Board of Health describes as “troubling” a draft report titled *Response Capacity During A Health Emergency—A Review of Selected Issues*. “After hearing from several experts at our October meeting, we believed there were reasons for concern,” said Board Chair Linda Lake. “This report shows those concerns are real. The resources that would be needed to respond to a public health emergency should be expanded, despite the current budget crisis.”

The report finds that the public health and health care systems need greater capacity to respond to a health crisis, such as a bioterrorism attack. “We are not unprepared,” says Board member and report sponsor Dr. Thomas Locke, “but I don’t think we are as ready as the public would like us to be.” The report recommends ways that policymakers can protect and enhance capacity in light of recent events.

The full Board will review the report in detail at its regular monthly meeting in Spokane, Wash., on Wednesday, November 14.

In addition, the Board will hear a presentation from Spokane Mayor John Powers, Dr. Kim Marie Thorburn, health officer for the Spokane Regional Health District, Vic Forni, executive director of the United Way of Spokane and others about the Spokane Poverty Assessment—a comprehensive effort to assess poverty levels and identify the implications and consequences of living in poverty, including adverse health impacts. The Board will also hear a Department of Health recommendation to initiate a review of the Food Code. Changes to the code would make food regulations more consistent across jurisdictions and improve conformance with federal guidelines.

Copies of the agenda and related materials are available by contacting the Board of Health or by visiting the board’s Web site at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/>.

###

The State Board of Health serves the citizens of Washington by working to understand and prevent disease across the entire population. Established in 1889 by the State Constitution, the Board provides leadership by suggesting public health policies and actions, by regulating certain activities, and by providing a public forum. The governor appoints ten members who fill three-year terms. Visit the board’s Web site at [www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/).